



NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Commission Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

September 17, 2004

RE: WC Docket No. 03-109

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

On behalf of the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) I would like to express our support for efforts to expand the Lifeline program to include all available providers.

The NRHA is a national nonprofit membership organization that provides leadership on rural health issues. The association's mission is to improve the health and well-being of rural Americans and to provide leadership on rural health issues through grassroots advocacy, communications, education and research. The membership of the NRHA is a diverse collection of individuals and organizations, all of whom share the common bond of an interest in rural health. Individual members come from all disciplines and include hospital and rural health clinic administrators, physicians, nurses, dentists, non-physician providers, health planners, researchers and educators. Organization and supporting members include hospitals, community and migrant health centers, state rural health departments and university programs.

As you know, Lifeline was created to ensure all Americans would have access to telecommunications services. It is an important federal program that provides discounts on local phone service for low income Americans. In order to best serve those low income individuals residing in rural areas, participants should have access to all competitive services, including wireless service.

In today's rapidly evolving telecommunications marketplace, wireless phone service is a better option for phone service for many low income Americans. Rural residents often travel long distances to work and many have no access to telephones while on the job. Many low income Americans work several jobs and rely on cell phones to keep in touch with the families, health care providers, or emergency services.

Expanding the carrier choices for low income people to all carriers that are willing to meet the service requirements has strong merit. It would bring the same choices and consumer benefits to low-income people, many of which reside in rural areas, that are available to other Americans. Most importantly, it would lower the costs for low income consumers and increase participation in the Lifeline Program.

MAILED 03-109 074
LAWRENCE

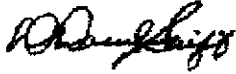
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I appreciate the opportunity to offer my comments on this proposal. I hope you will consider expanding the options available to low income residents of rural areas through the Lifeline program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. David Sniff". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "D" and a cursive "Sniff".

D. David Sniff
President